



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

MODERN LANGUAGE NOTES

VOL. XIX.

BALTIMORE, MARCH, APRIL, 1904.

Nos. 3, 4.

CLASSICAL NAMES AND STORIES IN THE *Bēowulf*.

The traditional and universal view of the *Bēowulf* assumes that it is a Germanic epic with respect to form and materials, for the Christian element, although not slight in bulk and importance, is regarded as a later addition to, or modification of, an originally heathen poem. Upon the basis of this assumption a very large 'literature' has grown up, and there has been room for many theories on many problems. I shall here briefly and tentatively present some materials bearing on the character of the poem. I regret that I am not yet able to deal as fully with the subject as its interest and importance demand, and I trust that scholars will generously accept what is now offered merely as a preliminary formulation of evidences and conclusions which I expect to treat more thoroughly at a later time. I shall try to show that many names and stories in the *Bēowulf* are of classical origin, and that the prevailing view of the poem as a Germanic epic must therefore be abandoned.

It may be said at the outset that not all evidences of connection between *Bēowulf* and classical materials are equally clear and convincing. If I shall succeed in establishing my general point of view, there will still be many questions unanswered, and the precise scope of classical influence will remain to be determined. On some points it is quite certain that differences of opinion will prevail even after the subject has been most thoroughly investigated by many scholars. It will sometimes be impossible to determine whether some features are Germanic or classical, or the results of a blending of these two sources or impulses.

The limitations of space will not permit me to discuss the history and character of the philological method by means of which I have been enabled to catch a few gleams of light in the darkness which surrounds the *Bēowulf*. It would be highly

fitting to indicate in this manner my indebtedness to the school of criticism whose most distinguished representative is Professor Sophus Bugge. It would also be of advantage for the discussion which follows, to indicate, in a general way, at least, what by this method has already been accomplished. There are and always will be differences of opinion on many details, but I believe that Bugge and others have shown that the mythological and heroic poetry of the so-called *Elder Edda* is of a composite character with respect to its materials: some elements are Germanic, some specifically Norse, and some are due to Christian or classical impulses.

It has been shown that Eddic poetry does not stand isolated from the European literature of its time. It is intimately and vitally connected with Western and Southern culture. The study of most literatures has led to similar conclusions with respect to them. Foreign impulses or materials may be traced in all great oriental and occidental literatures. The literatures of Greece and Rome, the romances of the Middle Ages, the folk-lore of Europe, all show an intermingling or blending of originally widely sundered elements. In the *Bēowulf* this may clearly be observed at least in the mingling of heathen and Christian materials.

That the so-called heathen element in the *Bēowulf* may be the result of a blending of native and foreign elements is a proposition which should not be considered improbable or absurd. The relations, peaceful and warlike, between Germans and Romans began at an early time and continued for a long period before Angles and Saxons are settled in England, and they have left tangible traces: Southern coins, ornaments, utensils, weapons, etc., which are found in Northern soil, are important witnesses of a lively and an early intercourse between Northern and Southern Europe; the Runic alphabet, whether of Latin or of Greek origin, was in use among Germanic peoples centuries before the Anglo-Saxon migration into England; and

the Latin loan-words in the early Germanic languages also clearly indicate the importance of Rome in early Germanic culture.¹ The early Germans learned so much from the Romans that it would not be surprising if they also learned something about Latin poetry and materials of poetry, such as names and stories of gods and heroes, and the like.

I.

The great deeds of the hero Bēowulf are three in number, and chronologically arranged they are: (1) his swimming-match with Breca in youth; (2) his fights with Grendel and Grendel's mother in manhood; and (3) his fatal conflict with a fire-spitting dragon in old age. I shall in the present paper discuss the first two of these, beginning with Breca.

The name *Breca* seems appropriate for a great swimmer, cf. *brecan ofer bæðweg*, *Elene* 244, 'ferri cum impetu per undas,' and ON. *breki*, 'billow,' a word which precisely corresponds to OE. **breca*. The word *Brondingas*, the name of the people ("der fingierte name des volkes")² over which Breca rules (cf. *Breoca* [wēold] *Brondingum*, *Widsið* 25), will receive the most consistent interpretation if we follow Müllenhoff³ in connecting it with German *brandung*, 'breaker, surge,' which seems to have been borrowed from Low German, cf. Du. *branding*. The name is sometimes interpreted as 'Fire-folk' or 'Sword-folk,' cf. *brond*, 'fire, sword,' but this results in permitting Breca to fall out of his rôle as a great water-hero. The use of *brond*, 'fire' in the formation of a word for 'breaker' or 'surge' is semasiologically not more difficult than the use of the same word for 'sword'; the gleaming edge of the breaker as it dashes against the shore or, perhaps better, the surging of the waves resembling the welling of fire (cf. OE. *wylm*, 'surging, raging, of fire,' *sæ-wylm*,

'brandung der see')⁴ easily accounts for this use of the word *brond*, 'fire.' There can be no well-grounded objection to calling our water-hero 'Swimmer, King of the Waves.'⁵ It would indeed be small credit to Bēowulf if he won in a contest with a hero partly or wholly out of his element.

The names *Breca* and *Brondingas* easily range themselves in a supposed Germanic water-myth. Müllenhoff's interpretation of Bēowulf's swimming-match with Breca assumes that the hero is "ein der menschen wohlgesinntes göttliches wesen, das in seiner jugend, d. h. im frühjahr die rauheit und wildheit des winterlichen meeres bricht, den stürmischen character desselben überwindet. Dieser selbst ist durch seinen gegner oder mit-schwimmer Breca repräsentiert."⁶ But not much can be done with the name of the father of Breca, *Bēanstān*, to render it corroborative of this interpretation. In one of his early articles⁷ Müllenhoff confesses that he can not explain the name, but his last word on the matter was that the name "scheint auf die see und seeungeheur hinzudeuten (vgl. altn. *bauni*, walfisch)."⁸ All parts of the story and the names as well are thus seen to be in most beautiful harmony with the interpretation mentioned.

But the name *Bēanstān* still continues to be troublesome. Even if its first element *bēan-* be identical with "altn. *bauni*, walfisch,"⁹ it may still be a matter of doubt what it really means and how it originated. The attempt has been made to make it reasonable by "correcting" the first element so that the name would be **Bānstān*, 'Bonestone, stone as hard as bone.'¹⁰ This does not seem very plausible, and since **Bānstān* does not stand in the text we must see in what direction plain *Bēanstān* will lead us.

¹ Cf. Müllenhoff, *ZfdA.*, vol. VII, p. 420: "Aber Breca's name bedeutet innerhalb dieses mythos gerade den kräftigen schwimmer durch die wildbewegten fluten."

² *Op. cit.*, p. 2.

³ *ZfdA.*, vol. VII, p. 421, foot-note.

⁴ *Beowulf*, p. 2.

⁵ Professor J. M. Hart, *Mod. Lang. Notes*, vol. XVIII, p. 118, says that he can not find "ON. *bauni*" in any of the dictionaries. It may be a ghost-word, but where did Müllenhoff find it?

¹⁰ Krüger, *Beitr.*, vol. IX, p. 573; approval by Bugge, *ibid.*, vol. XII, p. 55.

¹ Cf. Kluge, in Paul's *Grundriss*, vol. I, pp. 327 ff.

² Müllenhoff, *Beowulf*, p. 2.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Falk og Torp, *Ethym. Odb. over det norske og det danske Spr.*, s. v. *brænding* (Swed. *bränning*), very properly compare Lat. *caesus*, 'fire, surge.' Cf. Kluge, *Ethym. Wtb.*, s. v. *branden*: "connected with *brand* and means lit. 'to blaze, move like flames.'"

No one has been able to prove the existence of a word which in form and meaning is in accordance with the two conjectures mentioned.¹¹ There is, however, a word *bean-stone* which has been overlooked in this connection because it has not been looked for in the right place. This is the name of a precious stone which resembles a bean in a certain respect. It is described by Pliny in his *Natural History*¹² thus: *Cyamea nigra est, sed fracta ex se fabae similitudinem parit*. In the Bohn translation¹³ this reads, "*Cyamias* is a black stone, but when broken produces a bean to all appearance," and in the foot-note to *Cyamias* the editor uses the word *bean-stone*, but this has not found its way into the usual lexicographical works.¹⁴ Now, there is another precious stone which bears a very similar name. This is the stone *cyanos*, also described by Pliny:¹⁵ "We must also give a separate account of *cyanos*, a name which until very recently was given to a species of *iaspis*, on account of its *cærulean* color," etc. A considerable paragraph is devoted to this stone which is represented to have been of great value and very desirable. The names *cyamea* (*cyamias*) and *cyanos* could easily become confused on account of the great likeness between them and on account of the difficulty of distinguishing between *m* and *n*.¹⁶ It is possible that the creator of the name *Bēanstān* was familiar only with *cyamea*, 'bean-stone,' but I do not consider this probable. It is at any rate clear that he has had the name *Oceanus* before him and that he has made an attempt to translate it into his own tongue. *Bēanstān* is a translation of [*O*]ceanus through what is now harshly termed a pseudo-learned etymology. No other etymologizing was possible at this time. A similar dis-

regard of an initial letter or letters was very common among the etymologists of the Middle Ages.¹⁷ A very slight similarity between two widely sundered words was often sufficient for connecting them. Here, however, the similarity between *cyamea*, *cyanos*, and *Oceanus* is very great and the etymology is quite normal. How thankful we must be to the unreasoning scribe who wrote down *Bēanstān* instead of trying to explain it away!

If *Bēanstān* is *Oceanus* who, then, is *Breca*? Shall we look for him in a Germanic water-myth, or shall we seek him among the sons of *Oceanus*? Has *Breca* become the son of *Oceanus* in the same way, as, in a West Saxon Genealogy,¹⁸ *Scēaf* has become the son of *Noah*? The answer must be a very guarded one. It will be remembered that *Oceanus* is the father of about three thousand river-gods, and it is possible that 'Swimmer, King of the Waves,' may be one of these.

The names *Breca* and *Brondingas* certainly agree very well with the conception of a river-god (a *rex aquarum*, *undarum*? was he described as *fluctifragus*, 'wave-breaker'?), and the story connected with him in the *Bēowulf* is such that it may easily be thought of as having originated from some classical story of a river-god. I conjecture that the swimming-match may have originated from the contest of *Hercules* with the river-god *Achelous*. This was, indeed, a wrestling-match (*certamen*), but it may be thought of as having been converted into a swimming-match for the reason that the conception of a river-god as a great swimmer might most easily arise.¹⁹ A contest (*wettkampf*, not *kampf*) with a swimmer might very naturally lose its identity as a wrestling-match, but the four chief elements of the story, hero, river-god, contest, and victory of hero, would still remain. The contest of *Hercules* with *Achelous* has for its object the winning, by one or the other of the opponents, of *Deianira*, the

¹¹ Boer, *Ark. f. nord. Filologi*, vol. XIX, p. 35 f., reaches no conclusion with regard to the name, but suggests the meaning 'kern der bohne,' cf. *bēan-belgas*, 'beanpods, husks, cods.'

¹² Bk. XXXVII, 73.

¹³ Vol. VI, p. 460; cf. also Pliny's paragraph on *Cyamos*, 'bean,' *ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 347 f. (= XXI, 51).

¹⁴ Cf. Andrews, *Lat. Lex.*, s. v. *cyamea*: 'the bean-stone, a now unknown precious stone.'

¹⁵ *Op. cit.*, XXXVII, 38; Bohn, vol. VI, p. 432.

¹⁶ Bugge, *Home of the Eddic Poems*, p. 101, cites a form *Ánarr*, *Ónarr* from *Amor*, and also from *Gislason*, *Prøver*, p. 409, *mesopotania* < *Mesopotamia*, p. 118, *epineus* < *Opi-mius*.

¹⁷ Cf. W. P. Mustard, *The Etymologies in the Servian Commentary to Vergil*, Colorado Springs, 1892.

¹⁸ Cf. Earle-Plummer, *Two Sax. Chron.*, II, p. 4.

¹⁹ Cf. Roscher, *Lexicon*, s. n. *Kapros*: "1) Flussgott auf Münzen von Atusa in Assyrien aus der parthischen periode, zu fussen der sitzenden stadtgöttin ('The city seated on a rock from which issues a swimming river-god, the Caprus, with long goat's horns'), Head, p. 690, nach Gardner, *Parthian Coins*, Pl. 7, 22."

daughter of the king of Aetolia. Achelous first changes himself into a serpent and then into a bull, but is vanquished by Hercules, who tears one of his horns out by the roots, and he is metamorphosed into a river. The story of such a contest may have lost its particular details and again have been expanded by the addition of new ones, enough of the original one remaining to mark its identity. It will of course be understood that no attempt is here made to account for the specific form of the "match" in *Bēowulf* or in the *Egils Saga Ásmundar*.²⁰ This form of the story may have been developed in the North or it may have been founded upon the story of a swimming-match which already existed in Latin as a variation of the Hercules-Achelous legend.²¹ The localization of the story (Bēowulf is said to have reached *Finna lond*) is certainly a Northern feature, but it can not otherwise be determined how much is classical and how much Germanic.

II.

That the Grendel myth may also be founded upon, or show traces of, a classical story, is a possibility which must next be investigated. If Bēanstān is Oceanus, and if his son Breca may be a classical river-god, perhaps Achelous, then it is also possible that Bēowulf may be Hercules, or that he may have borrowed features from Hercules. The Grendel myth also raises the question of the identity of Bēowulf, but it is perhaps best to approach this question indirectly through a discussion of the identity of the Grendel monsters. The disguise of Oceanus and of a river-god in the Breca story is of such a character that

we must not expect to find a school-book version of a classical fable intact in the Grendel episode if it should prove to be of such an origin.

It will be useful to have the main points of the story in mind. Grendel is a monster which dwells in a swamp not far from the house Heorot, a magnificent mead-hall erected by Hrōðgār, king of the Danes. He comes by night and seizes thirty warriors whom he carries off to devour in his lair. He soon returns, and for twelve long years the Danes must suffer his nightly visits in their hall, which must be practically abandoned to the monster. News of their plight reaches Bēowulf the Gēat, who comes over the sea in order to slay him. He engages with him in a combat without arms and vanquishes him by tearing off his arm and shoulder. Grendel rushes back to his dwelling in the swamp to die. But the next night Grendel's mother comes to avenge her son. She seizes and carries off one of the beloved thanes of Hrōðgār. Bēowulf descends through the water to her cave where he, after a fierce combat, succeeds in killing her with a sword which he finds there, his own having proved useless. He also cuts off the head of the dead Grendel, which he brings back to Heorot as a trophy of his victory. The sword is melted by Grendel's blood.

There must be something unique about this fable, for it has not been possible to find a Germanic story bearing any great similarity to it. The Scandinavian parallels, especially that in the *Grettis Saga*, are so much like the story in *Bēowulf* that they have been considered to be connected with the latter. Müllenhoff²² says: "Ähnliche sagen, namentlich solche von kampf mit einem wassermann, der eine mühle beunruhigt u. dgl., sind jetzt häufig Aber in ihnen allen fehlt der kampf mit der mutter." This uniqueness of the fable has led to the theory that the fight with Grendel's mother is unoriginal. That there are two monsters so much alike might, of course, easily lead one to consider the second a repetition and a variation of the first; but there are, on the other hand, such differences between them, and especially between the two fights, that

²⁰ For the details see Bugge, *Beitr.*, vol. XII, pp. 51 ff.

²¹ There are numerous forms of this fable in literature and art. In the First Vatican Mythograph (Bode, *Mythographi Vaticani*, I, 58) the legend has become mixed up with the Alpheus story: "Oeneus, Parthaonis filius, rex Aetoliae, regnique sedem habens in Calydone, Deianiram filiam habuit, quam Hercules et Alpheus, qui et Achelous, dum peterent in conjugiam, pater opposuit illis hanc legem, ut invicem conluctantes, qui certamini alterum vinceret, illi Deianiram uxorem duceret Alpheus, seu Achelous, confusus Alcidis virtute, mutatis est in annem, elapsis hostilibus palmis; et timens semper, ne usquam appareat inimici praesentia, per concava terrarum undis Siciliae affluit."

²² *Beowulf*, p. 2.

both must be held to be equally original until the contrary is proved. Unsophisticated readers of the *Bēowulf* certainly regard the second fight as the crowning achievement of the hero and as the centre of interest in the first part of the poem. The so-called "lieder-theorie," which touches the point at issue, has proved nothing with respect to the poem, and its forcible application in this field has been a failure. I can not discuss it here, nor do I consider it necessary to do so.

No agreement has been reached among scholars with reference to the meaning of the name *Grendel* and of the myth. A resumé of some of the most important of the speculations concerning these subjects will in a general way show where we now stand.

Grimm²³ connected the name *Grendel* with OE. *grindel*, OHG. *krintil*, MHG. *grintel*, 'bolt, bar, riegel,' and compared it with *Loki*, the name of the evil god in Norse Mythology, which he connected with ON. *lúka*, 'claudere.' Grendel would, according to this view of his name, be a being which 'shuts in, incloses.' A similar use of Germ. *riegel* occurs in *höllriegel*, 'devil.' Much has been made of this interpretation by later critics. Müllenhoff²⁴ supports Grimm's comparison of Grendel with *Loki* by suggesting that the former represents, approximately, the same idea which in the Norse Mythology is distributed over the latter and his offspring, the *Miðgarðsormr* and the *Fenrisúlfr*. To Müllenhoff Grendel is the giant-like god or demon of the sea. Even to-day people say, "die Nordsee ist eine mordsee." Thousands of lives were destroyed by its onslaughts and only a god could bring help against them. Grendel is the sea in its terrible attacks upon a coast still unprotected by dykes. *Bēowulf* (in the "original" myth it was a god) appears in their midst as a savior and liberator. He fights with the "monster," and wounded it falls back to die in its bed. But another wave again wells forth over the land, and this wave is Grendel's mother. The god now descends to the depths of the sea where he grapples with the deep itself and wins a second victory. When he ascends the sea is wholly calm (*wēron yðgeblond eal gefēlsod*, 1621).

Bēowulf's fight with the Grendel monsters is therefore, according to Müllenhoff, deeply symbolic of the long struggle of Northern coast-dwellers against the sea until it must finally yield to their control. His interpretation has been widely accepted with modifications that are of no great importance. Grimm has been followed by E. H. Meyer,²⁵ who draws very subtle meanings out of the "bolt and bar" idea, as we may conveniently call it: "Grendel, d. i. riegel, an. *grindill* sturm,"²⁶ der das später in Heorots met verwandelte regennass absperrende oder raubende frühlingsturm, und seine grauliche mutter, die finstere wetterwolke, sind zu meerwölfen, der wetterleuchtende wolkenhimmel ist zur feurigem meerhalle geworden, vgl. Ymir und seine grossmutter."²⁷

An interpretation similar in principle to Müllenhoff's is that of Uhland,²⁸ who considered the two monsters to mean "die plagen einer verumpften und verpesteten meeresbucht." Laistner²⁹ expanded this theory into an elaborate and interesting discussion. The noxious and sickening vapors that arose from the swamps and moors were dispersed only by the gradual cultivation of the land. Grendel is the malarial fever which infests all swamp districts. Some support to this theory is given by Sarrazin,³⁰ and especially by Kögel³¹ who accepts it with a great deal of confidence and enlarges upon it with several interesting details, profiting by the interpretations of both Müllenhoff and Laistner. He finally cites from *mdl. Wb.* II, 2129,³² the entry *grindel id est slanghe* (there is also, he says, "noch eine weitere jedoch weniger sichere stelle"), which he would apply to the name *Grendel*: "Das wort gehört zu *grindan*,³³ 'knirschen, zischen, brausen.' Dass

²⁵ *Germ. Myth.*, p. 299.

²⁶ Cf. Sarrazin, *Beowulf-Studien*, p. 65.

²⁷ Cf. Sarrazin, *Beowulf-Studien*, p. 65; Golther, *Germ. Mythologie*, p. 172 f.; Mogk, in Paul's *Grundriss*, I, p. 1043.

²⁸ *Germania*, vol. II, p. 349 f.

²⁹ Wülcker, *op. cit.*, p. 267.

³⁰ *Beowulf-Studien*, p. 65.

³¹ *ZfdA.*, vol. XXXVII, p. 274 f.

³² This has not been accessible to me.

³³ So Ettmüller, cf. Wülcker, *op. cit.*, p. 261, but see foot-note; Skeat, *Journal of Philology*, vol. XII, pp. 120-131, accepts this etymology and attempts to identify the two monsters with two bears.

²³ Cf. Wülcker, *Grundr. z. Gesch. d. ags. Lit.*, p. 259.

²⁴ *ZfdA.*, vol. VII, p. 423, and *Beowulf*, pp. 3 ff.

wasserfluten unter dem bilde einer schlange mythisch vorgestellt werden, lässt sich auch sonst beobachten, ich erinnere nur an die lernäische hydra und an den Miðgarðsormr.”⁸⁴

Other discussions of the name and meaning of Grendel need not be reviewed here.⁸⁵ In regard to the etymology suggested by Grimm it may be said that its weakness was apparent already to Grimm himself, for he says, “keine ahd. *krentil* kenne ich.” No form **grandil*, ‘bolt, bar, riegel,’ has been found in any Germanic language. The word *grindel* does not seem to have been used in the same way as *riegel* in *höllriegel*, ‘devil,’ and nothing speaks in favor of the etymology as a whole. Kögel’s citation of MLG. *grindel id est slanghe* does not prove what it is intended to prove. It occurs only in a gloss and not in a context which requires for the word *grindel* the meaning ‘snake’ or ‘serpent.’ There is, moreover, great likelihood that the word *slanghe* is due to a mistake, at some time, either in the writing or printing of the word *stanghe*, ‘pole, bar,’ etc., for ‘*stanghe*’ (the word is MLG.) is precisely what we should expect *grindel* to mean.⁸⁶

So far as I am able to judge no satisfactory explanation of the etymology and meaning of the name *Grendel* has yet been given. I shall therefore venture to suggest a source for this name which has already been rendered possible by the conclusion which has been reached with respect to *Bēanstān* and *Breca*. *Grendel* is, of course, from an earlier form **grandil*, not from **grendil*, for a Prim. Germanic *e* before a nasal must become *i*,

⁸⁴ Farther on, *ibid.*, p. 270, Kögel says: “Nur so (*Bēaw*, *Bēow*) hiess der inguäische Ἡρακλῆς, der den Grendel erlegte, die lernäische schlange des nordens.”

⁸⁵ Little or no attention has been given to Arnold’s (*Beowulf*, Lond., 1876, p. 231) mention of ME. *gryndel*, ‘angry’; see also Grein, *Sprachschatz*, s. v. *grandor-lēas*.

⁸⁶ So I conjectured and wrote nearly two years ago after having read Kögel’s article at the Newberry Library in Chicago. A short time ago I had occasion to look up the same article in our own library. Our set of *Zeitschrift f. d. Altertum* formerly belonged to the late Professor P. J. Cosijn, and in a marginal note over against *slanghe* this scholar has written “l. *stanghe* Engl. St. 21, 446.” My conjecture has, therefore, been strongly corroborated. Boer, *Ark. f. nord. Filologi*, vol. xix, p. 20, accepts the gloss in good faith; cf. also Binz, *Beitr.*, vol. xx, p. 157, foot-note.

cf. OE. *bindan*: *helpan*. **Grandil* may without difficulty be derived from the Latin adjective *grandis*, ‘large, huge,’ and its use as the name of a huge monster may be due to the Latin source of the Grendel fable, for in such a source this monster may have been most naturally described as *grandis*, ‘huge, monstrous.’ The stem of the word is Latin, the ending has been Anglicised. *Grendel* is, therefore, so far as form and meaning are concerned, a close parallel to *strengel*, ‘macht habend, herrscher, strong chief,’ *Bēowulf* 3116, which is an expansion by the suffix *-il(a)* of the adjective *strang*, *strong*, ‘strong, mighty.’ Just as *strengel* means ‘the strong one,’ so *Grendel* means ‘The Huge One, The Monstrous One.’

If the name *Grendel* contains the Latin word *grandis*, what, then, is the source of the Grendel fable? If it had been preserved to us, it would probably have been pointed out long ago. But it may still be possible to identify a story although it may at the same time not be possible to point out its source in volume or manuscript. I therefore confine myself to a comparison of this fable with a well-known classical story with which it has several striking points of similarity.

The usual form of the story concerning the Lernæan hydra attributes to this monster a hundred, fifty, nine, or seven heads. She dwells in a swamp at Lerna near Argos in Greece, from whence she issues to devastate the neighboring territory. Hercules comes to give her battle, but before he can kill her, a gigantic crab comes to her assistance and bites him in the leg, but the crab is slain by him, and Hercules again gives his attention to the hydra. With a sickle (or a sword) he cuts off some of her heads, but for every head cut off two new ones spring forth in its place. Iolaus, the charioteer, brings firebrands with which Hercules sears the wounds so that no new heads may grow forth. He at last cuts off the one immortal head of the hydra and places upon it a huge stone. He dips his arrows in the gall of the hydra and they forthwith become poisonous.

Important correspondences exist between this fable and the story of Grendel in the *Bēowulf*. There are two monsters and they dwell in a swamp. Grendel issues forth at night, destroys men and renders a house uninhabitable. The hydra devastates the neighborhood about her. Hercules and

Bēowulf are similar figures, they both hear of the scourge and come in order to slay it. Both Grendel and the hydra are in their own way endowed with invulnerability, which, however, the hero overcomes in each case. The gall of the hydra renders arrows poisonous, the blood of Grendel melts a sword.

There are, of course, differences between the classical and the *Bēowulf* monsters, and the question arises whether these are of sufficient importance to render connection between them improbable. The monstrous crab, usually mentioned without descriptive details, does not survive as a crab, but "levelling" may here easily have taken place. Instead of a hydra and a crab we have two hydras, the hydra being the dominating figure. It will be objected that Grendel and Grendel's mother are not two hydras, for the hydra is a many-headed serpent while the former have human shape in so far as it is possible to determine their shape from the extremely vague descriptions in the *Bēowulf*;⁸⁷ and it may also be urged that the Lernæan hydra had no cave at the sea-bottom. But I cannot consider these things as of very great importance. In the First Vatican Mythograph (6th or 7th century⁸⁸) we read indeed as follows: "Hydra fuit in Lerna, Argivorum palude, serpens, quinquaginta habens capita, vel, ut quidem dicunt, septem, qui omnem regionem devorabat. Quod cum audisset Hercules, adiens eum expugnabat,"⁸⁹ etc. But in the Second Vatican Mythograph the version is not so clear: "Lerna palus fuit, in qua hydra bestia erat, L capita habens," etc.⁹⁰ In this passage no word clearly indicates that the hydra is a serpent, for the word *hydra* is here explained by the more

familiar *bestia*, not by the surely just as familiar *serpens*. So far as the conception of the monster is concerned the transition from the words *in qua hydra bestia erat* to *in qua bestia erat* or *in qua bestia grandis erat* is a very easy one. The many-headedness of the hydra in the usual conception of her does not correspond with the half-human figures of the Bēowulf. But the reason for this discrepancy may perhaps be sought in the fact that the hydra was often, in classical sources,⁴¹ confused with Echidna, its mother. That Grendel's mother may in part represent Echidna will possibly explain the relationship which exists between the two monsters, Echidna being a prolific mother of monsters. I shall here quote, in a translation, Hesiod's description of Echidna and her brood, which gives us a very close picture of a monster of the type of Grendel and Grendel's mother:⁴²

Another monster [Ceto] bare anon
In the deep-hollow'd cavern of a rock;
Stupendous, nor in shape resembling aught
Of human or of heavenly: monstrous, fierce,
Echidna: half a nymph, with eyes of jet
And beauty-blooming cheeks: and half, again,
A speckled serpent, terrible and vast,
Gorged with blood-banquets, trailing her huge folds
Deep in the hollows of the blessed earth.
There in the uttermost depth her cavern is
Beneath a vaulted rock: from mortal men,
And from immortal gods, alike, remote:
There have the immortal gods allotted her to dwell
In mansions rumored wide. So pent beneath
The rocks of Arima, Echidna dwelt
Hideous; a nymph immortal, and in youth
Unchanged for evermore. But legends tell
That with the jet-eyed maid Tiphæon mix'd
His fierce embrace; a whirlwind rude and wild;
She filled with love, gave children to the light
Of an undaunted strain: and first she bore
Orthos, the watch-dog of Geryon's herds;
And next, a monstrous birth, the dog of hell:
Blood-fed, and brazen-voiced, and bold, and strong,
The fifty-headed Cerberus: third she gave
To birth the dismal hydra, Lernæa pest;
Whom Juno, white-armed goddess, fostering reared
With deep resentment fraught, insatiable,
Gainst Hercules: but he, the son of Jove,

⁸⁷ Cf. Schemann, *Die Synonyma im Beowulf-liede*, Hagen, 1882, pp. 7 ff.; cf. also the following passage (1350 ff.):

þæra oðer wæs,
þæs þe hīe gewislicost gewitan meahton,
idese onlicnes, oðer earm-sceapen
on weres wæstmum wræc-lāstas træd,
næfne hē wæs māra þonne ænig man oðer;
þone on gēar-dagum Grendel nemdon
fold-būende.

⁸⁸ Bugge, *Studier over de nordiske Gude- og Hellesagns Oprindelse*, p. 248.

⁸⁹ *Mythographi Vaticani*, ed. Bode, I, 62.

⁹⁰ Bode, II, 163.

⁴¹ Cf. *Metamorphoses*, IX, 67 ff., where Hercules is represented as referring to his fight with the "Lernæan Echidna"; Cicero, *Poet. Tusc.*, 2, 9, 22; and see the Latin dictionaries.
⁴² *Theog.*, II. 295-318; translated by C. E. Elton, London, 1894 (II. 360-392).

Named of Amphitryon, *in the dragon's gore,*
Bathed his un pitying steel, by warlike aid
 Of Iolaus, and the counsels high
 Of Pallas the despoiler.

The cave of Echidna, when brought into the story of the hydra, could easily become a cave under the water instead of beneath a rock. In *Bēowulf* 104 ff. it is said of Grendel that he had inhabited the moors, the swamp, the home of monsters, "since the time when the creator had banished him" (*siððan him scyppend forscrifen hæfde*). This reminds one of the banishment of Echidna as described by Hesiod in the above passage:

from mortal men
 And from immortal gods, alike, remote :
 There have the immortal gods allotted her to dwell
 In mansions rumored wide.

The connection of Grendel with Cain (l. 107 f.) is also, I believe, in part due to the similarity between the banishment of Echidna (-hydra) from the sight of the gods and the banishment of Cain from the sight of God. In *Bēowulf* 111 ff. all monsters, the *eotenas*, the elves, the *orenēas*, and the giants (*gīgantas*), who fought against God (the gods), are derived from the race of Cain. Here Cain seems to have usurped the place which properly belongs to Grendel's mother, for in the above passage from Hesiod and also elsewhere Echidna is represented to be the mother of several of the monsters of classical mythology. She is the mother of Chimæra, the Sphinx, the Nemæan Lion, the dragons which guard the apples of the Hesperides and the Golden Fleece, and of Scylla.⁴³ Of her it could most truly have been said: *panon untýdras ealle onwōcon* (l. 111).

In short, the type of a monster represented by Grendel and Grendel's mother in the *Bēowulf* is so much like the Echidna-hydra conception, that the latter may well be their prototype.⁴⁴ No Germanic conception of a monster is in as close agreement with that found in *Bēowulf* as the foreign one just discussed. This accounts not only for the general conception, but also for a number of

⁴³ Cf. Hyginus, *Fabulae*, cll.

⁴⁴ In Roscher, *Lexicon*, s. v. *Herakles*, p. 2243, mention is made of late Roman art-remains upon which the Hydra is represented "als weib mit zwei schlangenbeinen," or "als schlange mit einem weiblichen kopf."

important details.⁴⁵ I shall reserve for a future occasion a closer examination and a more thorough discussion of the classical conception of Echidna and Hydra, and the Grendel episode in the *Bēowulf*.

III.

It has been shown that *Bēanstān* is a translation of *Oceanus*, and that the name *Grendel* probably contains a most obvious Latin epithet descriptive of a huge monster. I shall now point out another curious example of translation, which will also serve to show how far the *Bēowulf* is from unsophisticated popular poetry. The *Gēats* are sometimes called *Weder-Gēatas* (1493, 2552) or *Wederas*⁴⁶ (225, 341, 423, etc., but always in the gen. pl. form *Wedera*), and their country is called *Weder-mearc* (298). The origin of this name has not been understood, and many grave errors have arisen in consequence.

It is generally agreed⁴⁷ that *Weder-*, *Wederas*, is identical with OE. *weder*, 'wind, storm.' Fahlbeck⁴⁸ and Bugge,⁴⁹ who agree on this interpretation of the word, argue that it does not suit Vestergötland in the south-western part of Sweden, but that it admirably describes Jutland, the land of the Jutes.⁴⁹ Hence, and for other reasons, the *Gēatas* of *Bēowulf* are not the people of Vestergötland, but the Jutes of Jutland. Jutland is exposed to winds and storms, but Vestergötland is chiefly an inland province. It is further urged that the *ēalond ūtan* (l. 2335), which the dragon devastates with its fire, must refer to an island of some size and importance near the land of the

⁴⁵ In Hercules' contest with Achelous the latter, transformed into a bull, loses one of his horns, which is torn out by the roots. In the Grendel episode the arm and shoulder of the monster is torn off by *Bēowulf*. This feature can not be paralleled by numerous stories of hands or arms cut off by the sword. Classical influence is possible.

⁴⁶ Cf. OE. *Herða*, gen. pl., from *Herðgotan*; Latin *Visi*, sg. *Vesus*, with the same meaning as *Wisigothae*, Bugge, *Home of the Eddic Poems*, p. 158.

⁴⁷ I pass over such guesses as Thorpe's, *Beowulf*, Index, p. 318, cf. Müllenhoff, *Beowulf*, p. 13.

⁴⁸ 'Beovulfsquädet såsom källa för nordisk fornhistoria,' *Antiquarisk Tidskrift för Sverige*, vol. VIII, p. 41.

⁴⁹ "Jutland må med skäl kunna kallas Vindmark" (= *Wedermeare*), Fahlbeck, *ibid*.

Gēats, say Fylen (Fahlbeck⁵⁰), or that it is itself the land of the Gēats, namely Jutland (Bugge). Moreover, the fact that the Gēats are called *Sægēatas* (1851, 1987) does not agree with the fact that Vestergötland had very little sea-coast, and that the West-Gēats were essentially an inland people. I cannot here give a full summary of the arguments on both sides; suffice it to say that scholars are divided upon this question into two groups, of which the one considers Bēowulf to be a West-Gēat, and the other, a Jute.

I think it can be shown that Bēowulf was neither a West-Gēat nor a Jute, but that he was really an East-Gēat, and that the *Weder-Gēatas* of Bēowulf are the people of Östergötland. *Weder-Gēatas* is, I believe, simply a translation of Latin *Austro-Gautae*, the translator having connected *Austro-* etymologically with Latin *Auster*, 'a south wind,' which in Latin poetry is synonymous with 'storm' and 'bad weather.' Cf. *Auster imbricus*, *spiritus Austri imbricator*, *auster fulmine pollens*, *auster validus, vehemens, nubilus, humidus, pluvius, frigidus, hibernus*.⁵¹ The *Weder-Gēatas* are therefore the *Austro-Gautae* and Bēowulf is an East-Gēat.⁵²

Much has been made of the point that Bēowulf makes the journey by sea from his own country to Denmark in one day (l. 219), but the importance of such an estimate of distance has certainly been exaggerated, for we can not assume that the poet (or whoever was responsible for the estimate) spoke from actual experience or knowledge. The knowledge that the *Weder-Gēatas* are the East-Geats will help to explain several things not clear before. The *ēalond utan* (2335) may be Öland, an island close to the eastern coast of Sweden. Perhaps the word *ēalond* might be printed as a proper name. I think there is no great likelihood that the island Gotland was meant, for this is far out near the middle of the Baltic. Öland may have been counted as part of Östergötland in the fifth and sixth centuries. During the Middle Ages it

was probably under the law of Östergötland.⁵³ At any rate, one must not judge of the location of the southern boundary of Östergötland in early heathen times by that of the modern province. The name *Sæ-Gēatas* does not point to Jutland or the island Gotland as the home of the Gēats, nor does the fact that Gēats and Swedes are represented as carrying on war *ofer sæ* prove that they were far apart with a considerable body of water between them. It may be taken for granted that they carried on naval operations to a considerable extent on the Baltic. That they may have travelled and fought by sea is not more strange than the fact that Harald Hårfagr in 872 won his supremacy over the district kings of Norway in a great naval battle at Hafsford: *ofer sæ* may be taken to refer to the conventional mode of travel and of war.

In his swimming-match with Breca Bēowulf is said to have reached *Finna lond* (580), the land of the Finns. I see no good reason why this should not be taken to refer to the present Finland, and the guesses on Finheden, Fylen, the land of Finn in Friesland, and Finmarken in northern Norway, may all be set aside as equally improbable. By the identification of the *Weder-Gēats* with the East-Gēats a very close relation is also shown to exist between the swimming-match in *Bēowulf* and that in *Egils saga ok Ásmundar*.⁵⁴ Egil was born in *Gautland* and *ræð fyrir Smálandum*. "Dennoch heisst es dass er in Gautland wohnte, weil nämlich die bewohner mehrerer gegenden dem gesetze der Östgoten gehorchten." Against the opinion of Bugge, who further says, "Ursprünglicher ist offenbar die im Beowulfgedichte vorkommende sagenform, dass der held aus Jütland in die offene see hinaus schwimmt," it may now be said that there is a remarkably close agreement between the two versions of the story with respect to its localization. It is not possible to decide in favor of Jutland as the home of Bēowulf on the basis of the name

⁵⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 40.

⁵¹ See the dictionaries.

⁵² Jordanes, *Get.* iii, 21-24, mentions the *Gauthi* = 'Gēats,' *Ostro-gothae*, here 'East-Gēats,' and the *Virgauthi* = **Visigauthi*, 'West-Gēats,' cf. Paul's *Grundr.*, III, p. 830.

⁵³ "Öland bildade under medeltiden ett helt för sig: det hade egen lagman, men antagligen östgötalag (i Linköping gick enligt landslagen nyvald konung ed inför alla östgötar och öländingar)"—*Svensk Familiebok*, s. v. Öland.

⁵⁴ See Bugge, *Beitr.*, vol. XII, pp. 51 ff.

**Heaðo-rēamas* (so plausibly corrected from *Heaðoræmes*, cf. *Heaðo-Rēamum*, *Widsið.* 63), which has been identified with *Raumaríki* in the southern part of Norway.⁵⁵ It is possible that this name may also have originated in a translation of a foreign name.⁵⁶

SIVERT N. HAGEN.

The University of Iowa.

GALDOS'S ELECTRA.

In view of the importance of Galdós's play *Electra*, as a social and literary document, the following remarks may not be without interest, as supplementary to those made by Mr. R. E. Bassett in his review (published in *Mod. Lang. Notes* for Jan., 1904, pp. 15-17) of Mr. O. G. Bunnell's edition of the play.

On comparing the text as given by Mr. Bunnell with the text of the original edition, we note seven omissions. Two of these Mr. Bunnell may have considered necessary if the book were to be used in a mixed class. Opinions differ as to the conditions under which expurgation becomes necessary, and, indeed, as to whether it should ever be permitted; but it seems to me that even these omissions are uncalled for if the students in a mixed class be old enough to *read intelligently a play with a clerical problem*. The other five omissions most seriously affect the plot, since the one point that Galdós wishes to emphasize is entirely lost. In *Doña Perfecta* his point was that bigotry and fanaticism would lead one to murder; in *Electra* it is that they will lead one to lying. Let us proceed to the omissions.

At the opening of Act I, Scene 2, (Bunnell, p. 11; Madrid ed., pp. 12, 13) we find the Marques de Ronda in conversation with his friend Don Urbano García Yuste concerning *esa niña encantadora . . . esa Electra*, whom Don Urbano and his wife Evarista have taken under their guardianship. They are rehearsing also the history of Electra's mother, Eleuteria.

⁵⁵ See Bugge, *ibid.*, p. 55.

⁵⁶ A second instalment of this article will appear in the next number of this Journal.

DON URBANO. No sabía . . . Yo jamás me traté con esa gente. Eleuteria, por la fama de sus desórdenes, se me representaba como un ser repugnante . . .

MARQUES. Por Dios, mi querido Urbano, no extreme usted su severidad. Recuerde que Eleuteria, á quien llamaremos *Electra I*, cambió de vida . . . Ello debió de ser hacia el 88 . . .

DON URBANO. Por ahí . . . Su arrepentimiento dió mucho que hablar. En San José de la Penitencia murió el 95 regenerada, abominando de su *libertinaje horrible, monstruo* . . .

Mr. Bunnell has suppressed the last three words in italics and has substituted for them the one word *pasado*. He allows the students to use their imagination as to what that 'past' was, whereas Galdós leaves no doubt in one's mind as to the character of Eleuteria. The editor did *not* suppress, from the page preceding the passage just quoted, a sentence of which his suppression is but explanatory: *Esta niña, cuyo padre se ignora, se crió junto á su madre hasta los cinco años*.

This drama is aimed at clericalism in general, but in particular it is against the Regulars, and Jesuitical influence. The sinister character of the play is one Pantoja, the friend and counsellor in the home of Don Urbano. He is a lay-Jesuit, fanatical and bigoted. His subtle influence pervades the household. His every wish is gratified. His keen eye sees everything. He performs his duty, as he considers it, no matter what the cost. Even truth is sacrificed to the fulfilment of his pernicious ends. Every word that comes from the mouth of Pantoja, then, is for a purpose, and Galdós certainly meant no one to tamper with his text. Pantoja believes himself to be the father of Electra, and considers that for this reason he has a supreme right to direct her actions and *llevarla por el camino del bien*. We learn, in Act IV, Scene 6, what he wishes to accomplish. The dialogue is between him and Doña Evarista. Electra is in love with her cousin Máximo, a young widower with two children. Her marriage with him would entirely upset Pantoja's plans for her. His object is to have her enter the convent of San José de la Penitencia (the same in which her mother died) there to have her character formed, and later to become Superior and under his direction govern the Congregation. But there is another reason why Pantoja wishes to cloister